



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE  
**Library Assistants' Association.**

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L.A.A. MEETINGS—LONDON, MANCHESTER.  
SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING ON THE RULES.  
HOW BEST TO INCREASE THE USEFULNESS OF THE  
L.A.A., BY B. L. DYER.  
BERMONDSEY PUBLIC LIBRARY (*Illustrated*).  
STUDY CIRCLE.  
ANNUAL DINNER.  
NOTES AND NEWS.  
NOTICES.

... SOME COTGREAVE LIBRARY AIDS. ...  
A FEW TESTIMONIALS.

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## The Indicator.

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BY F. J. BURGOYNE. 1897.

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"THE FREE LIBRARY: ITS HISTORY AND PRESENT CONDITION."  
BY J. J. OGLE. 1897.

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N.B.—See also "Greater London," by E. Walford, M.A., F.S.A. (page 360); "Methods of Social Reform," by Prof. W. Stanley Jevons, M.A., F.R.S., LL.D.; "Public Libraries," by T. Greenwood, F.R.G.S.; &c., &c.

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† Sixty-two Public Libraries in London and the Metropolitan area are using it.

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# The Library Assistant:

*The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.*

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## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895.

SIXTH SESSION.

YEAR 1900-1901.

*Members are requested to carefully read the announcements appearing on this page, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements may be expected.*

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### DECEMBER MEETING.

Mr. Cedric Chivers will open a discussion on Bookbinding at the third meeting of the session. This will be held at the Battersea Central Library, Lavender Hill, on December 12th, at 8 p.m., when Mr. Inkster has kindly consented to preside. The treatment of a subject of such importance by so eminent an exponent of the Art ought to attract a large attendance, and Mr. Chivers will be glad to have long lists of questions given to him.

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### NOVEMBER MEETING.

The second meeting of the session was held, by the kind permission of the Libraries Committee, at the West Ham Public Library on Wednesday, 28th November, when Mr. and Mrs. Cotgreave kindly provided tea for the members and their friends, who made a large gathering. This enjoyable proceeding at an end, the company spent an interval in examining the library, and particularly some large illustrated reference books which were specially laid out for inspection. Meantime, each member present was supplied, by the generosity of Mr. Cotgreave, with two views of the Kimberley Library reproduced by process from photographs sent to him by Mr. Dyer. These represent the interior and exterior of the Library, and will form valued mementoes of our late Hon. Secretary and Editor.

Mr. Bridle, of East Ham, presided over the meeting, which assembled to hear Mr. Dyer's L.A.A. Cotgreave, 1900 Prize Essay, and introduced Mr. Councillor Weaver Smith, chairman of the West Ham Libraries Committee. Mr. Weaver Smith very heartily welcomed the L.A.A., and went on to say that he understood that this was a meeting of an association. He belonged

to an association and to a union, and he would say that if they intended to better their position and to make their association a power, they must induce every assistant in their district to become a member of the Association. Union is strength, and if they wished to push themselves forward in their work, and to make themselves felt, they must bind themselves together. He was sorry he could not stay to hear the paper, but hoped it would give them the enthusiasm they needed for their work and hoped that enthusiasm would increase.

Mr. Chambers was called upon to read the Essay, which appears elsewhere in these pages, prefacing it with the wish that the author could have been there to read it himself.

After the reading Mr. Brown, the Hon. Secretary, remarked that he felt that they had all listened with great interest to Mr. Dyer's essay, for the well-being of the L.A.A., he hoped was at the heart of each of its members and friends. Being a privileged member he had been able to read all the essays on this subject, and had been struck with the similarity in the ideas of all the competitors. The Association must be in a very perfect state for it seemed to have been difficult to suggest anything new. One or two recommended the formation of more branches, but the formation of a branch comes about naturally and gradually, and depends entirely upon the desire of assistants in congested districts. Mr. Dyer had once suggested a branch association in each library, but such a scheme he feared would be impossible. One essayist thought that the journal would grow presently, because so many assistants would want to air their knowledge. Another recommended a strong representative committee, assistants being such a medley that he who would guide them must be a born diplomat. Others again had noticed neglect on the part of older members towards new members and juniors. We do need some improvement in feelings of good fellowship. The Association should be more of a social intellectual club, where assistants could be sure of finding a friend or making a new one. This should not be difficult since they had common interests.

Many of our members and other assistants were in isolated libraries. We could only touch such assistants by means of the journal which should therefore be of some really practical use. Their Committee had already decided on a scheme of self-education especially suitable for such assistants. He had no need to dilate on that scheme now for it would be published in the next number of the Journal together with the first course of reading. The Committee were also able to offer prizes for sets of test questions, and they would be gratified to hear that the general funds of the Association need not be touched for this

object. The full syllabuses and test questions were already arranged to June next, as well as a suggested course for the following 12 months, the book prizes for the first sets of papers sent in and the annual prizes of £1 for the next five years were also in hand. Promptitude must characterise our action, and imaginary difficulties not be allowed to impede the operation of the scheme, but there had been no undue haste on the part of the Committee.

Mr. Chambers thought the first thing to be done was to increase the membership. It was estimated that there were upwards of 3,000 assistants in the United Kingdom, and surely it was not going too far to expect at least one-third of them to take a sufficient interest in their calling to join what was intended to be their own association. He instanced large towns like Birmingham and Edinburgh which were not represented, and pointed out how easy and desirable it was to have branches in such centres. In the populous Leeds district a branch was particularly needed. He strongly urged each member for the progress of the Association to introduce another member before the next annual meeting. Mr. F. Meaden Roberts had always advocated making the L.A.A. a useful society. It was not so much necessary for it to be made more useful, as for the assistants to make freer use of the advantages which it held open for them. It was just those assistants who most helped themselves who availed themselves of their advantages at the L.A.A., and just those who got on. Outsiders occasionally got into good posts though the apathy of the profession. The interest of librarians would go a long way to benefit the L.A.A., and he hoped they would exert their influence strongly in its favour. Mr. A. J. Philip took exception to the idea that the Reading Circle was likely to be of very great benefit, because it would not arouse the interest of those who were not already awake to their position as students, neither did he believe that any benefit would result from amalgamation with the Library Association. That body, he considered, had given their assistance too grudgingly, and they did little to make known amongst assistants the advantages, such as the professional examination, which they offered. Mr. J. F. Hogg held that greater advantages to the profession would result if a better commencing salary and future prospects were made available. Boys often began as low as 5s. and in six years might reach 20s., with the result that the assistants obtained were of a low class of education. He thought they should move for a living wage. Mr. E. G. Rees related how he had as a boy approached a committeeman with a view to a rise of salary. "My lad," said he, "make yourself worthy of the rise, and the rise will follow." We could increase the usefulness of the Association and our own value by attending the discussions and

entering heartily into the Study Circle. If assistants would do their best to improve themselves in their work, their chiefs would see that they had their rise. Mr. W. Pickard suggested that librarians might be induced to take an interest in the L.A.A. by making them honorary members, and thought that the membership might be increased by circularising those libraries where there were no members. Mr. C. Whitwell ventilated the want of a central meeting place, the provision of which, he believed, would draw larger attendances. Mr. Henry Ogle felt that as the meetings of the L.A.A. had developed the capacity of the members in public speaking and other ways, so the Study Circle would create greater confidence and unity amongst assistants, and permanently uplift the profession throughout the country. Those members who were in isolated positions could not readily be present at their meetings, but they could recognise in the new scheme the desire of the Committee to cater for their special needs, and they would, he felt sure, respond by heartily joining in it. He pleaded for fair consideration of the relations between chiefs and assistants on both sides, and suggested the affiliation of the L.A.A. to the Library Association. Mr. McDougall was afraid some of the assistants were in the habit of thinking that the man at the top did less than his share of the work in public libraries, but he knew they would find, when they became chiefs, that the chief had much more on his shoulders than anyone else on the staff.

The Chairman next called upon the librarians present to address the meeting, and Mr. Z. Moon said that he was glad to do all in his power to assist the L.A.A. He would never use pressure in its favour with his assistants, but he knew that they strongly supported that Association, and he believed they were wise in doing so. He believed that library assistants should have a sure prospect of promotion where they were employed, and the library would benefit under such a system. Mr. G. Preece considered that the L.A.A. had at one time by their policy estranged many friends among librarians, but he trusted this was so no longer. He suggested that it was desirable to make a change in the governing body of such associations as this, by retiring all members of the Committee in rotation after two or three years of service. Mr. A. Cotgreave said that many suggestions had been made that night which assistants could well take to heart. Some could well spend more of their leisure in the reading of our best authors and cultivating some other language than their own, though, considering the sedentary nature of their employment, he could scarcely blame those who spent more time over athletics. He much regretted Mrs. Cotgreave had not been well enough to remain throughout the meeting, but he hoped they had all enjoyed themselves very much and would come again in



some future time in double numbers. After the discussion was concluded, Mr. Bridle rose to express regret for Mr. Dyer's absence from amongst them. It seemed long before he gained the recognition for which he worked, but now Kimberley's gain was our loss. Referring to beginners on the staffs of libraries he found that assistants were much better off to-day than when he began. His Committee gave 10s. a week, and the difficulty was to select one from the applicants for such a post. The amalgamation of the L.A.A. with the L.A. failed to commend itself to him as a useful proceeding.

The usual votes of thanks were carried in the heartiest manner, first to Mr. and Mrs. Cotgreave for their renewal of their many kindnesses to the L.A.A., second to the West Ham Libraries Committee for again permitting the L.A.A. to meet upon their handsome premises, and third to the chairman, Mr. Bridle, for his able presidency during the evening. There was then held the

#### SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING.

The members of the L.A.A. proceeded to deliberate upon the question of adopting the revised rules as printed in the November number of the Journal. The Chairman, Mr. E. G. Rees, formally proposed, and Mr. Ogle seconded, the adoption, and after considerable discussion, the motion was carried with one or two minor alterations.

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#### NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.

##### NOVEMBER MEETING.

A notable meeting in the annals of this Branch was held on November 21st, inasmuch as it marked a new departure in the literary work of the members.

To those who gathered in the Hulme Library, under the chairmanship of Mr. J. H. Swann, the paper read by Mr. R. Irwin, the librarian, proved exceptionally interesting, and called forth the expression that this, the first of a series, would be the forerunner of others equally good.

In dealing with the life and works of John Byron, Mr. Irwin explained that he was merely treating his subject in an introductory manner, that he had not attempted a complete bibliography, but touched briefly upon the more salient features of his works, and he hoped his hearers would make themselves acquainted with a poet and epigrammatist whom every native of Manchester should honour.

Born in 1691 at Kersal, near Manchester. Byron, at the age of 16, became a pensioner of Trinity College, Cambridge. . . . In the "Spectator" (1714), then a weighty factor in the literary world, his essays on "Dreams" appeared, followed

two months later by the publication of his poem "Colin and Phebe : a Pastoral," with an introduction by the editor.

Leaving college soon afterwards, possibly by reason of his qualms against taking the oath of Abjuration, he returned to Manchester, thence proceeding to Montpelier, where, for a time, he studied medicine.

Returning home, it is interesting to learn that his friends tried to obtain for him, without success, the librarianship of Chetham's Hospital, at which he expressed his desire for the post because, to quote his letter . . . . "besides 'tis in Manchester, which place I love entirely." . . .

Marrying his cousin, he was bound to look about him for a profession, but not caring to practice medicine he decided to take up the teaching of a system of shorthand which he had invented, and so proceeded to London, where he could find more scope for carrying out his project. His fee was £5, and he soon acquired a comfortable income, being honoured also with a fellowship of the Royal Society, on account, it is said of his mathematical abilities.

At this period, 1725, his letters and journal are very full of his life in the capital, where he mixed with all the literary lights and wits of the day at the fashionable coffee-houses.

About this time his famous epigram on Handel and Bononcini, which was credited at first to Dean Swift, startled "the town."

Some say, compared to Bononcini  
That Mynhur Handel's but a ninny ;  
Others aver that he to handle  
Is scarcely fit to hold a candle ;  
Strange all this difference should be  
"Twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee !

Needless to say he established his reputation as a wit.

In 1740, succeeding his eldest brother to the family estate, Byron settled down in Manchester, paying periodical visits to London.

Soon after, the Jacobite rebellion broke out, but we find that with age he had learned to be cautious ; as, although generally known as the Poet Laureate of the Jacobites, he took the precaution of being brought in as a prisoner when paying his addresses to the Young Pretender.

In 1752 he published in Harrop's "Manchester Mercury" the carol "Christians Awake," the composer being John Wainwright of Stockport.

Byron died in 1763, and is buried in the Byron Chapel of Manchester Cathedral.

If only because of the fact that he was the first writer of repute to publish anything in the Lancashire dialect he deserves well at the hands of his countrymen, although his numerous writings place him prominently amongst his contemporaries as a poet of no mean order. Space will not allow of further mention in detail of his works, but a study of these will amply repay the trouble of research.

The value of the paper was further enhanced by the exhibition of the original MS of "Christians Awake" inscribed "to Dolly" (his daughter) and a Diary or Commonplace-book in the original vellum bound MS, which has never been published among his remains. A copy of his system of shorthand (kindly lent by the Chairman) and several other works were also shown. At the close Mr. Irwin received the best thanks of the meeting for his excellent paper, a similar vote being accorded to Mr. H. W. Kirk (Chetham's Library) for the use of the works of the poet provided for inspection, and the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chairman for presiding.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE N.W. BRANCH will be held in the Reference Library, King Street, Manchester, Wednesday, 12th December, at 8 p.m. Business permitting it is proposed to discuss fully the "Study Circle" scheme, which it is hoped that every member will join.

#### HOW BEST TO INCREASE THE USEFULNESS OF THE L.A.A.

The Cotgreave 1900 Prize Essay, by Mr. B. L. Dyer, awarded the prize of one guinea by the adjudicator.

To discuss how best to increase the usefulness of the L.A.A. one must bear in mind that the true usefulness of such an association can only be judged from the standpoint of the public interest, while one must clearly have in view its avowed objects:—"to promote the social, intellectual, and professional interests of its members."

Ruskin once said that "the primary object of all such (professional) associations is to exalt the power of their own profession in the public mind."

Some have condemned this as being a characteristic and one-sided statement from the Seer of Brantwood, while others have held his words more than justified, and that all professional associations are of necessity dangerous and against the public interest. But the professional associations are among the great educative forces of the world, and if a profession is really of service to the public, the only real way in which its power can be exalted in the public mind is by making it capable of doing better

and more valuable service. The more powerful a profession, the higher is the standard that it insists upon from its neophytes, the greater the safeguard to the public, and the greater the protection from robbery at the hands of ignorant pretenders to qualification, and from quacks of all kinds.

True it is that in wrong hands the machinery of a powerful profession may be used for increasing the individual power and revenues of practitioners, and of hedging them in with undeserved dignities and protections, but in the end these things recoil, and the over vaunted calling is eventually degraded in the public estimation. The higher the standing of each individual member of a profession the less likelihood is there of such a misuse occurring.

It may be said that the true primary object of every professional association is to so increase the usefulness of each and every individual member that he may be the more useful servant of the community, and the list of members of a professional association affords a not unfair evidence to the general public of the men most interested in the increase of the efficiency of the services procurable from a given calling, and presumably themselves acquainted with the most recent developments in that calling.

William Morris in his beautiful allegory clad those members of society who performed the most menial of duties in golden raiment, and while we of the L.A.A. seek to enwrap librarianship in professional dignity we ought never to seek to thus cloak ignorance and mere pretension, any more than Morris in his attempt to show the equal dignity of all service to the community would have made his Golden Dustman a shirker of the work that gave him his garb.

The promotion of the interests of the L.A.A. is the promotion of the interests of the public—we seek to make library assistants more and more efficient servants of the public. The diffusion of knowledge as to the best methods of work, the comparison of ideas, and the exchange of experiences cannot help but to broaden the minds of all those engaged in similar work, breaking down the narrow-minded bigotry of systems, and the following of grooves, and thus widening general attainment. Even as a cataloguer may avail himself of all the work which has been done in the past by other cataloguers and thus save much individual labour, so by a comparison of methods and experience in all branches of library work time may be saved, to the public gain.

It seems almost impossible to suggest any new feature in connection with the present programme of the L.A.A. The value to the London assistants of a more or less regular attendance at the meetings held in the various library buildings so kindly placed

at our disposal is perhaps not as well appreciated as it might be. The great difficulty and expense of travelling to these meetings from the towns adjacent to London, and to the Manchester meetings from the towns adjacent leads to the hope that in time to come will be developed a series of smaller branches, commenced possibly on the lines of a reading circle, such as led to the formation of the Birmingham and District branch of the L.A. Reading circles with a definite object of study are powerful education factors, and with the object of studying for the L.A. examination or some more generally recognised diploma, much useful work might be done. Large branches are of course most useful in developing *esprit de corps* or professional spirit, but a not inconsiderable use may be derived by a scheme on the lines of the University Correspondence Classes, the National Home Reading Union, or the Ruskin Hall Lectures, if some one would find time for this useful and pioneer work of organising the places "where two or three are gathered together."

The journal could easily be extended to double its present size if a larger proportion of the 3,000 library assistants in England joined the L.A.A., and any additional pages added should be devoted exclusively to educational matter. Courses of reading might be suggested, questions asked and model answers given by the co-operation of the lecturers, and summaries of the L.A. Education Committee lectures might well be printed for the benefit of those who cannot attend.

The question of new developments of the work suggests itself, but as in all other voluntary associations the difficulty at once arises of how much the unpaid officers of the association are to sacrifice their scant leisure for the benefit of their colleagues. For those who take no part in the actual work it is comparatively easy to point out flaws in administration, to suggest improvements and changes. But it must never be forgotten how much of the work is done under adverse circumstances, and that it is all voluntary, without fee or reward.

The older, wealthier, and parent Library Association is also a voluntary association, and it has the power by its charter to admit associate members. It does so—but compare for a moment what an associate member of the L.A. gets for his subscription with what a member of the L.A.A. gets!

The great want of the library world is a really live and active associate branch of the Library Association, and the work of the L.A.A. will never be concluded until such is established.

Other professional associations have their associate branches, which are generally powerful educative societies, designed to prepare junior practitioners to pass the professional examination, without having passed which, active membership of the parent

association, or of the profession is ultimately impossible.

Librarianship as a profession is as yet too young to know its own ideals and limitations, but we must look forward to the day when it will do so, and prepare for that day. Those who went before us commenced the work, it is our duty to help it on. Not ours to crown the work but ours to say:—

“I have sought, for long years have I laboured, but I have not found. . . . I have not rested, I have not repined and I have not seen her. . . . When I lie down at the last, other young men will stand young and fresh. By the steps I have cut they will climb, by the stairs I have built they will mount. They will never know the name of the man who made them. At his clumsy work they will laugh. But they will mount . . . they will climb . . . they will find her—and through me! And no man liveth or dieth to himself.”

*Written, LONDON, Feb. 1900.*

*Revised, KIMBERLEY, Sept. 1900.*

#### BERMONDSEY PUBLIC LIBRARY.

One of the greatest benefits to local government in London anticipated and intended by the framers of the London Government Act of 1900 will be the absorption, or amalgamation, of a number of administrative bodies, each at present of independent authority, into one Board or Council controlling almost all the purely local affairs of each parish as at present constituted. This is, of course, apart from the larger question of the amalgamation of parishes to be included in one borough.

In Bermondsey Parish there have been for very many years two distinct authorities, the powers and duties of which will, under the new Act, be carried out by the Borough Council. The first of these two, in age and multiplicity of duties, is the Vestry; the second, named “The Board of Governors and Directors of the Poor of St. Mary Magdalen,” with extensive and peculiar powers granted under a special Act of Parliament, among them being the rating of the parish. Had the Bill of 1900 been in force in 1887, or earlier, and a single body governing the parish instead of these two independent authorities Bermondsey might very much earlier have had the benefit of the public library than actually was the case. This proves the value of the new Act in at least one direction.

The proposal to establish a public library in Bermondsey was first mooted early in 1887, and a poll of the ratepayers was demanded. The Vestry proceeded to make arrangements for the voting, but the Governors and Directors forestalled them by immediately undertaking this duty, and accordingly issued voting papers on October 27th, 1887. The advocates of the library

issued a circular on the previous day setting forth in a terse form a few leading facts on the objects and scope of the proposed library, and a copy was delivered at every house in the parish. The circular bore the name of most of the leading residents, of all shades of religious and political feeling. The poll required votes on considerably more than the usual number of points laid before the burgesses in a similar case, and as the various points are of interest, and the result has never before been fully published, they may be detailed here. They certainly indicate no indecision of opinion :

In favour of adoption	...	...	3,636
Against	"	...	1,734
Informally filled up ...	...	...	641
Returned not filled ...	...	...	3,522
Not delivered (empty, etc.)	...	...	764
			<hr/>
			10,297
Not collected (lost and destroyed)...			1,699
			<hr/>
Total papers sent out	...	...	11,996
For a $\frac{1}{4}$ d. rate	...	...	27
" $\frac{1}{2}$ d. "	...	...	346
" $\frac{3}{4}$ d. "	...	...	29
" 1d. "	...	...	3,234
			<hr/>
			3,636

The result of the poll was reported to the Vestry by the Governors and Directors, and thereupon the two Boards came into conflict. The Clerk to the Vestry informed his Board that in his opinion the poll was illegally carried out because it was not conducted by the Vestry. Commissioners were not appointed, and it appeared almost as if the wish of the burgesses was not to be gratified. Counsel's opinion was obtained, and it was held that the Governors and Directors were the proper authority to conduct the poll. These dissensions continued to June, 1889, very nearly two years after the poll, when, upon a change in the constitution of the Vestry, Counsel's opinion was adopted and the appointment of nine Commissioners to put the provisions of the Act into force was approved.

Now that progress was possible no time was lost. A large plot of land, situate in the very centre of the parish, measuring 99 ft. in depth, with a frontage to a main road of 75 ft. 9 in., being a superficial area of 6,731 ft., was purchased at a cost of £3,000, and the buildings standing thereon demolished. Competitive plans were sent in, and those by Mr. John Johnson,

F.R.I.B.A., were selected. Mr. Johnson having had a wide experience in the designing of public libraries, has provided an excellent and eminently suitable building, acknowledged to be the chief architectural adornment of Bermondsey, at a cost of £7,000. For the erection of the building and purchase of the land a sum of £10,000 was borrowed from the L.C.C. at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest on the usual repayment terms. The foundation-stone was laid November 29th, 1890, by the Chairman of the Commissioners, Mr. A. Lafone, M.P. During the construction of the building Mr. John Frowde, Chief Librarian of the library at Barrow-in-Furness—which he organised and arranged—and formerly assistant at the Liverpool Public Libraries from boyhood, was appointed (April 30th, 1891) Clerk and Chief Librarian to the Commissioners, from amongst upwards of ninety applicants. The purchase and cataloguing of books proceeded concurrently, during the later months, with the erection of the building. The reading-room, being ready for use, was provisionally opened by the Chairman in November, 1891, and on January 18th, 1892, the whole of the building was formally opened by the Right Hon. Sir John Lubbock, Bart., now Lord Avebury.

The building is distinctly a success in design and arrangement of the various departments, and experience has proved it to be a credit to the architect. On entering, by the main door, is a roomy, well-lighted vestibule and hall measuring 37 ft. by 15 ft. wide. On the right is the news room, 42 ft. 9 in. by 33 ft. with accommodation for sixty newspapers. On the left the Committee-room and Librarian's private office. The Lending Library, immediately opposite the entrance, is an apartment 40 ft. square with counter 35 ft. long affording ample space for the indicators and for the public. The well-lighted double staircase gives access to the first floor containing the reference library, 40 ft. square, with a domical roof in centre, supported on Ionic columns. It is lighted on all sides of the room as well as in the clerestory at the base of the dome. Directly facing the staircase is the magazine reading-room, 40 ft. by 24 ft., containing some 200 magazines and reviews. Adjoining is a reading-room for women, 22 ft. by 16 ft., with lavatory accommodation. The whole of the front on the second floor is exclusively occupied by the librarian's apartments, with every residential convenience. In the basement are large and convenient rooms for storage, book-binding, heating apparatus, etc. One of these rooms (43 ft. by 33 ft.) on the front of the building and with an excellent light, is proposed for a boys' reading-room for which purpose it is excellently suited. This extension of the work will, it is hoped, be shortly taken in hand. The greatest and most striking feature in the building is the admirable





BERMONDSEY PUBLIC LIBRARY.



arrangements for lighting of which there is abundance in every room. The exterior is of English Renaissance character, freely treated, and is executed in red brick and stone or terra-cotta, with a high roof, end pavilions, and a lofty centre carried up as a flèche. There is ample accommodation for 80,000 volumes.

The library was opened with a stock of 10,000 volumes, since increased to 15,000. The daily average of books lent is 400 to 450. The attendance in the reading-rooms averages 1,500 per day, of which about 100 are women. The library comprises three departments—Reference, Lending, and Juvenile, the latter containing 1,700 volumes, with a special catalogue for juveniles only. The Cotgreave indicator, without any adjuncts, is in use, and works smoothly and satisfactorily. Since the library was opened in January, 1892, to July last, 953,034 vols. have been lent and only three books lost during the whole period. The catalogues are on the dictionary system with ample cross references, and have given satisfaction. There have been issued two editions of the general catalogue, two of the juvenile, and one supplement to the general. The latter, issued in December last, is somewhat different in form to its predecessors, though it may not be new in principle. The compiler considered that much unnecessary space is devoted in catalogues to the titles of novels—when the catalogue is in alphabetical form—and experience has shown that readers almost invariably seek under the author's name for novels required. It was therefore decided to enter fiction under the author's name only. In many alphabetical catalogues, of course, the title entry of novels is omitted, and, instead, are grouped together under the general heading "Works of Fiction." But this plan seems undesirable because the titles of novels are divided from those of other books by the same writer. The scheme, so far as Bermondsey is concerned, is admittedly experimental, and the result will be watched with interest. It has been on trial for nearly twelve months, and appears to be satisfactory. Someone has pointed out that, in library matters especially, "there is nothing new under the sun," and the compiler would be glad to compare notes with anyone who has previously tried the same system.

In October, 1892, the Library Commissioners decided on Sunday opening during the winter months, and since then for each successive winter the reading-rooms have been open from 3 to 9 p.m. until last winter. The attendance was never by any means encouraging, and it was evident Sunday opening was not required. The attendance was never more than 218 per day, and for some winter seasons averaged as low as 160, while in the reference library the issue, never more than twenty-five, has been as low as an average of eight. For a working-class district

these figures "speak volumes" to the Sunday opening advocates. The Vestry, at length, seeing that in spite of efforts made to popularise the institution on Sunday, providing Sunday papers, etc., the effort was futile, decided to discontinue the experiment after eight years' trial. Observation has shown that no one seems to be disappointed. The visitors on that day were comprised almost exclusively of those who attended also every other day, and whose chief difficulty in life appears to be how to pass the time with least exertion.

The collection of books, prints, maps, etc., relating to the district is constantly followed, and a large selection has been brought together. These have already proved of value in affording information relating to the ancient records of the parish, a history of which is shortly to be published by Mr. Elliot Stock, the illustrations having been, without exception, copied from a selection of those in the library. Some time ago the Librarian was instructed to examine the store of material in the keeping of the Vestry, and has already discovered papers of a highly interesting character.

Altogether the affairs of the library may be said to be in a very prosperous condition, while the future is full of hope. With a large accession to the population and the extension of the boundaries there is scope for a large increase of the public library system, and we feel the work is in the hands of men sympathetic enough to work hard for the good of the public library cause.

#### STUDY CIRCLE.

A notice appeared in our last issue respecting the formation of a "Reading Circle and Correspondence Class," and the L.A.A. Committee have now been able to draw up a scheme of reading which may be called a "Study Circle."

Four books, each on a distinct subject, will be suggested for reading during the year, the course to be announced soon after each Annual Meeting.

From the present time to the Annual Meeting in June next, portions of Quinn's "Manual of Cataloguing," Brooke's "Primer of English Literature," Saintsbury's "Primer of French Literature," and Jacobi's "Printing" will be allotted for reading monthly. Where considered necessary, mention will be made of special points in the allotted portions, and, in the case of English Literature, some book of the period under study will sometimes be suggested for simultaneous reading.

Sets of four questions, which all assistants are invited to answer, will appear in the "Library Assistant" month by month on the parts already studied. The papers will fall in two divisions,

senior and junior, and a book prize of the same value will be given every three months in each division, to the assistant who sends in the best set of papers during that period. Composition, orthography, and neatness and legibility in handwriting will be taken into consideration in judging the papers.

An annual prize of £1 will be given to the assistant who carries off the greatest number of book prizes in one year.

All the papers must reach the Hon. Secretary of the L.A.A. at the Public Library, Kingsland Road, London, N.E. on or before the 14th day of each month, and should be accompanied by a sealed envelope bearing outside a distinguishing name, and a statement as to whether the competitor is senior or junior, the real name and address being placed inside.

The Hon. Secretary is enabled to make special arrangements for supplying any of the text-books to members of the Study Circle at very low net prices, payment to be made at the convenience of the purchaser, and the transaction would be strictly private between the assistant and himself. Those who desire to avail themselves of this offer should apply without delay, sending stamps for postage of the books.

After careful consideration the Committee place the foregoing plan of work before their colleagues as providing an introduction to some of the knowledge most necessary in the profession, and they feel assured that it will prove to be of value to all who follow it with earnestness and regularity.

The work set for December is as follows:—

Jacobi, "Printing." Read preface and pp. 1-52, noticing especially the sizes of types and styles of printing.

Brooke, "Primer of English Literature." Read chap. I.

Saintsbury, "Primer of French Literature." Read chaps. I. II.

Quinn, "Library Cataloguing." Read chaps. I. II. III.

### THIRD ANNUAL DINNER.

A very successful dinner was again enjoyed by the members and friends of the L.A.A. on 21st November at Anderton's Hotel, the arrangements reflecting great credit on the Entertainment Committee and their Hon. Secretary, Mr. G. E. Roebuck.

Messrs. Cotgreave (*West Ham*), Courtney (*Minet*), Hobbs (*Rotherhithe*), McCall (*Linchouse*), Macfarlane (*British Museum*), Moon (*Leyton*), Peddie, and Roberts (*St. George, E.*) were amongst those present, Mr. E. G. Rees and Mr. W. G. Chambers respectively occupying the chair and vice-chair.

When the last course had been discussed, the toast of "Her Majesty the Queen" was received with highest honours, and the National Anthem was sung, all standing.

The toast of the "Library Association" was proposed by Mr. Henry Ogle, who said that it represented the profession in the United Kingdom, and was chiefly recruited from Public Libraries. He held that the relations between the L.A. and the L.A.A. should be of a mutually helpful character. The leisure at the disposal of public librarians was very limited, and the work on behalf of assistants which they had cheerfully done was not so extensive as they themselves desired. Assistants might acknowledge this fact, and enable the L.A. to extend the area of their operations by availing themselves freely of all the advantages which are offered. The L.A.A. might show their goodwill by affiliating themselves with the L.A., a proceeding which need not affect the constitution of either body. In the unavoidable absence of Mr. T. Mason (*St. Martin's*), Mr. R. A. Peddie replied, and said that the L.A.A. was started with the intention of being a separate independent association and he did not think that it was in need of any support by affiliation with the L.A. Friendly relations should be maintained between the two Associations, and he always advocated everyone joining the L.A. at the first convenient opportunity. The L.A. was young compared with some other corporate institutions, and it was well known that it had its difficulties, but there was a very brilliant future before it when it should be able to settle questions without regard to personalities.

Mr. Cotgrave proposed the toast of the "Library Assistants' Association" in the following words:—

In undertaking to propose the progress and prosperity of the Library Assistants' Association, I fear that my regard for that Association has caused me to rashly step into the shoes of someone much better able to do justice to the toast, and after hearing the able speeches of Messrs. Peddie, Ogle, and other gentlemen I am more alarmed than ever. However, although my words may appear deficient in eloquence or fervour you will all, I feel sure, credit me with a real warmth of interest in your association and a desire for its welfare, and will, I hope, on this account, take the will for the deed.

At such a moment we cannot fail to think with gratitude of the efforts of your early organisers and workers together with those who have so well supported them in later years, and I feel sure, that in this connection, I shall have your cordial permission to mention the names of Messrs. Fortune, Caddie, Carter, Chambers, Rees, Meaden Roberts, Ogle, Vellenoweth, Peddie, and Dyer. How greatly we should be rejoiced to have with us to-night one absent friend "who though lost to sight is still to memory dear," but if not in the body, in spirit we know that he is with us, and that we have his best wishes, and if I may coin a

phrase, I would say that the wireless telegraphy of the soul will convey our warmest greetings to him in his adopted home across the boundless expanse of the ocean and the veldt. I have had several communications recently from Mr. Dyer and two photos of the Kimberley Library which will appear in "Views and Memoranda of Public Libraries." I have brought some here for inspection and shall ask you to accept copies when printed. In one of his letters the fact is once more exemplified "that there is nothing new under the sun" for he says in effect that the open access system pure and unadulterated was in full swing at the Kimberley Library when he arrived, so that he might well exclaim that open access, like the poor, is "always with us," and feel a somewhat similar sensation to the man who ascended the Alps to escape from advertisements of a certain pill and found them there. I believe, however, this system is carried on at Kimberley in its most humane form and without such instruments of torture as turnstiles, red and green labels of various shapes, pieces of coloured wool and other ingenious devices to exercise the mental faculties, memory and temper of the readers.

I learn through the courtesy of your worthy secretary, Mr. J. Wilson Brown, that since your association was founded the number of members has gradually increased until at the present time you have a membership of nearly 200. This is highly encouraging and creditable to those who have so well steered your barque through the stormy seas of doubt and trouble connected with the early history of all new movements.

The library assistant holds an unique position for helping the reading community by his continued and direct intercourse with the readers, from which his Chief is to a great extent debarred owing to his secretarial and other special duties. It is, therefore, if I be permitted to say so, highly incumbent that his dealings with the public should be marked by never-failing courtesy and kindness, even to those discontented beings who always ask for books that are out or those who object to paying fines. I am happy in the belief, judging from my own assistants and those of other librarians whom I know, that the general feeling existing between the public and the library staff is one of mutual goodwill and forbearance, and I am often gratified in the course of perusing the correspondence of readers, and other library notes, which appear in my press cuttings, at the kind and commendatory remarks made in connection with the staff of the various libraries mentioned. In this connection I ask permission to name an old assistant of mine, Mr. G. H. McCall, now librarian of Limehouse, and I believe the youngest librarian in London. In further reference to the readers I would say we must always bear in mind that many of them are ignorant and unaccustomed

to rules and regulations. Then there is the young man far away from his family and practically "homeless amid a thousand homes" in this and other great cities, where, after the day's work is done, he feels his loneliness and the necessity of recreation or relaxation of some kind. Here steps in the library as the home he requires, the books as his friends, and last but not least the library assistant who can do so much to introduce to his notice *friends worth knowing* and to make his library home a home indeed.

Before concluding I would like to strongly impress upon such assistants as it may concern, the great necessity, if they are to rise in their profession, of devoting much of their leisure time to reading, especially to reading well edited selections from the best writers. In books, we have the best products of the best minds. Great writers are indeed best known through their books, and frequent communion with them cannot fail but lead up to manlier resolves and higher aspirations. Scientific publications should in these days of polytechnics, and other institutions devoted to scientific education, be particularly studied and the assistant should be *au courant* with the latest works. You must remember that you have rivals who, without the slightest claim to library training, have too often of recent years pushed their way among you and snatched the plums of the profession. I am glad to learn that you have adopted a scheme of organised reading which I believe is chiefly due to your secretary, Mr. J. Wilson Brown. I shall have the pleasure of your presence (I hope of all) at West Ham next Wednesday to hear some suggestions by Mr. Dyer for the advancement of the Association.

Before concluding my remarks I must express my personal thanks to Mr. Roebuck for his admirable arrangements to-day, which is in all respects equal to those of previous occasions when I have had the privilege of being present.

I sincerely trust that the association will go on fulfilling all the desires of its members and friends, and I have much pleasure in cordially proposing the toast—the health, prosperity and long life of the Assistants' Association.

As the officer of longest standing, the treasurer, Mr. W. G. Chambers, responded. He was intending to give some information respecting Mr. Dyer, but Mr. Cotgrave had forestalled him. He thought the Study Circle which they were just launching on its career ought to be of great service to its members. It was a small beginning, but he hoped the departure would lead up to large developments, perhaps a compulsory professional examination.

The health of the Chairman was then proposed by Mr. F. Meaden Roberts, who said the L.A.A. had been fortunate in its



chairmen, and not least in the tactful management of their present head. The Chairman referred to the many friends he had made, and the knowledge he had gained by his connection with the L.A.A., and was much gratified by the kind manner in which they had honoured his toast. He proposed the health of Mr. Roebuck, the Entertainment Sub-Committee, and the members and friends who contributed to the musical pleasures of the evening which was enthusiastically toasted.

Mr. A. Milverton presided at the piano, Meesrs. Chamberlain, Courtney, Cogswell, Walter Rees, Steed, Vellenoweth, and Young delivering the vocal numbers, and receiving numerous encores. "Auld Lang Syne" concluded a most enjoyable time.

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#### NOTES AND NEWS.

EAST CLAYDON.—Lady Joan Lloyd-Verney, in the presence of a distinguished company, opened the new building for the Public Library on November 10th. As might readily be surmised, our colleague, Sir Edmund Verney, is largely responsible, by his generous actions, for this handsome development of the work.

EDINBURGH.—The North Branch Library, in conjunction with a new Nelson Hall, was opened on October 25th by the Lord Provost. The Library is to accommodate 12,000 volumes. Professor Masson delivered an address, in which he complimented the Librarian, Mr Hew Morrison, and an inaugural concert was held in the Nelson Hall during the evening.

GREENOCK.—Mr Carnegie has added £3,000 to his former donation of £5,000, for the purpose of turning the old Post Office into a Public Library.

HAMMERSMITH.—A most interesting exhibition of illustrated books was arranged in the Town Hall by Mr. Martin, the Chief Librarian, in October, with the object of stimulating the attendance of the public in the Reference Departments of the libraries. There were Kelmscott Press Books, lent by Mr. Emery Walker, "Bits of Old Chelsea," and other topographical works, a volume engraved and coloured by de Louthembourg, illustrating the scenery of England and Wales, Winkle's "British Cathedrals," Ackerman's "Westminster Abbey," "Our People" by Keene, and many other valuable works.

LEEDS.—There are 22 Branch Libraries in this city, four being located at police stations, and 3,000 volumes for juvenile readers have recently been distributed amongst them. The

children obtain a choice of the whole selection, by means of the method of interchanging the stock between all the libraries. A strenuous effort is being made by Mr. Walker and his colleagues to form a Branch of the L.A.A. in the district, and we wish them hearty success.

ST. BRIDE FOUNDATION.—A conversazione on the sixth anniversary of the opening of the Institute to celebrate the opening of the T. B. Reed Collection, presented by Mr. J. Passmore Edwards, was held on November 20th, at the Institute. The chair was taken by Mr. C. J. Drummond, and the large company assembled was addressed by "Anthony Hope." The Governors hope to acquire from Mr. G. W. Jones a collection of typography and kindred crafts from which specimens were on view. Handsome souvenirs, of which copies will shortly be placed in the L.A.A. Library, have been printed, containing a portrait of Mr. Passmore Edwards, and articles by Mr. Lange, the Librarian, and Mr Thorne, the Assistant Librarian, upon these libraries, together with a report, beautifully illustrated with views of the various departments of the Institute.

SOUTHWARK.—The new Libraries Committee for this borough is to consist of 12 councillors and 12 ratepayers who have no seat on the Council.

WALTHAMSTOW.—The portrait of the late M.P. for Walthamstow, Mr. Sam Woods, is to be hung in the Public Library.

WEST HAM.—The museum, built by the munificence of Mr. Passmore Edwards, and containing most of the Essex Field Club collection, was opened on October 18th by the Countess of Warwick. After opening the Museum the party adjourned to the Technical Institute, where Mr. Passmore Edwards performed the re-opening ceremony after the renovation of the building, which was nearly destroyed by fire in October, 1899. The Countess of Warwick made a tour of the Library, and accepted from Mr. Cotgreave a copy of the "Souvenir of the Opening," and also a copy of his "Contents-Subject Index," afterwards inscribing her name in the visitors' book.

#### L.A. EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

The next professional examination will be held on January 29-31, 1901. Intending candidates must send their names to the Hon. Sec., Mr. H. D. Roberts, 44A Southwark Bridge Road, S.E., together with a fee of 10s., on or before Saturday, January 12th. Arrangements will be made for

provincial candidates to be examined at convenient centres.

The fourth series of classes will begin in February next.

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#### LIBRARY ASSOCIATION—N.W. BRANCH.

The prizes for the two best reports of the Lectures and Proceedings at the fourth session of the Northern Summer School, held at Liverpool in June last, have been awarded as follows:—First prize, Mr Alfred H. Edwards, of the Liverpool Public Libraries; second prize, Miss Kate Fearnside, of the Public Library, Waterloo-cum-Seaforth.

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#### SOCIETY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIANS.

The annual meeting of the Society of Public Librarians was held at the Bishopsgate Institute, E.C., on Wednesday evening, November 7th. There was a good attendance, and three new members were elected. The following are the officers for the ensuing year:—Mr. Z. Moon, Chairman; Mr. W. C. Plant, Vice-Chairman; Mr. H. S. Newland, Hon. Treasurer; and Mr. C. W. F. Goss, Hon. Sec.

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#### NEW MEMBERS.

SENIOR.—Messrs. Ernest Marriott (*Manchester*), and Charles Mellor (*Ashton-under-Lyne*).

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#### APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES.

DUFF, Mr. E. Gordon, has relinquished his post as Joint Librarian of the John Rylands Library.

EDGECOMBE, Mr. F., Assistant, Kensal Town, to be Assistant, Hampstead.

GUPPY, Mr. Henry, appointed Joint-Librarian of the John Rylands Library, to be Principal Librarian.

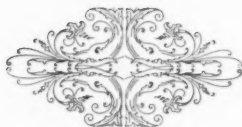
GUTHRIE, Mr. — National Library of Ireland, to be an Assistant Librarian, John Rylands Library.

ONIONS, Mr. T. A., B.A., Sub-Librarian, Newcastle, to be Librarian at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

RAE, Mr. —, Lord Crawford's Library, to be an Assistant Librarian, John Rylands Library.

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A CORRECTION.—We find that we were mistaken in assuming that Mr. B. L. Dyer was the first trained assistant to proceed from England to South Africa, as Mr. Lewis, of Cape Town, suggests that his training under Mr. Nicholson, at the Bodleian, should count for something. We quite agree with him.



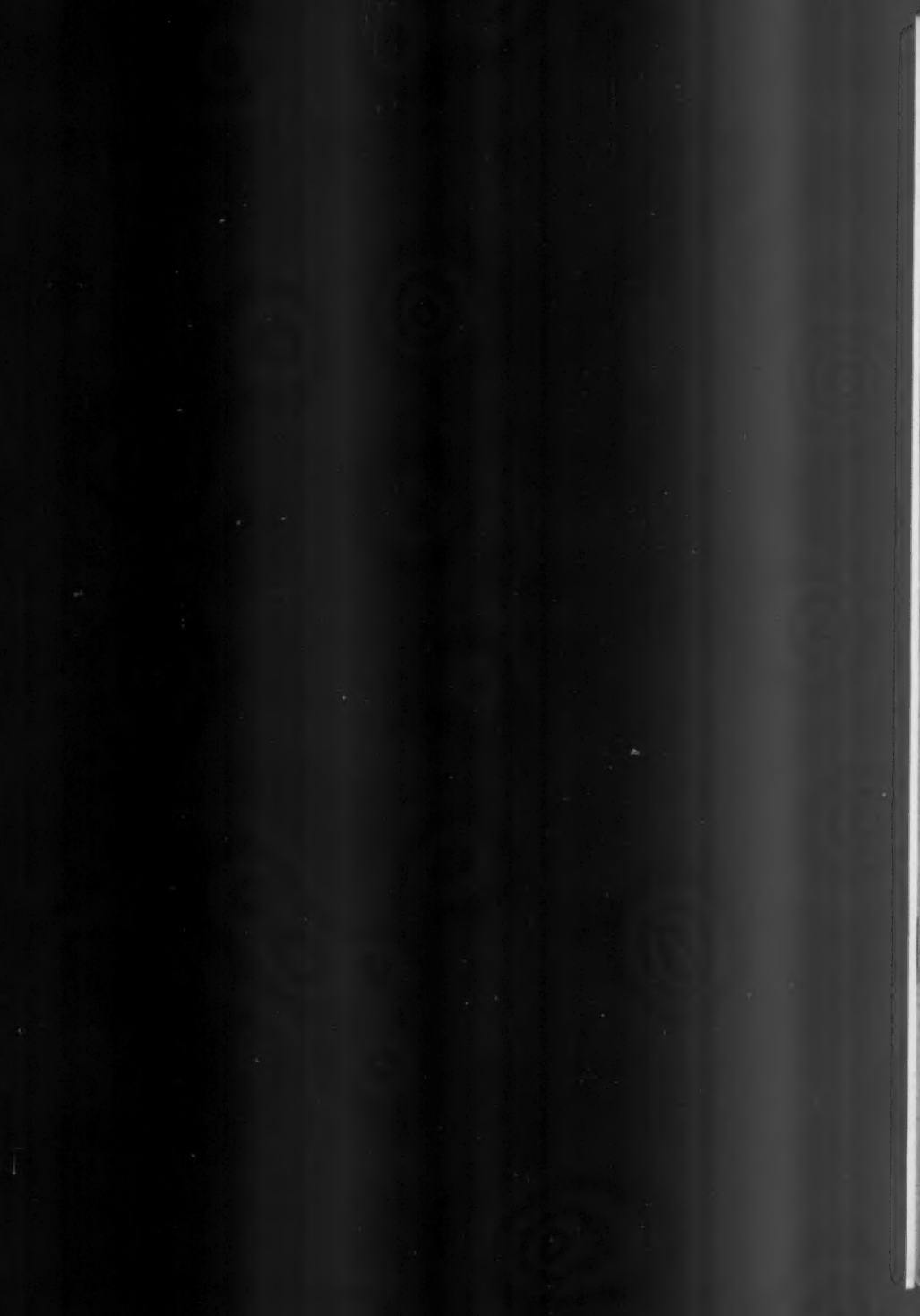
#### NOTICES.

Communications relating to the Journal should be addressed to the *Hon. Editor*, Mr. Henry Ogle, 60 Constantine Road, N.W.

Subscriptions should be paid to the *Hon. Treasurer*, Mr. W. G. Chambers, Stoke Newington Public Library, N. Senior Members, 5/-; Junior Members, 2/6; including a copy of the Journal monthly. Subscription to the Journal 3/- per annum post paid to non-members.

All other communications should be addressed to the *Hon. Secretary*, Mr. J. W. Brown, Public Library, Kingsland Road, N.E.





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